ASCS Today

Use care with market cards

By TOM CONRAD
ASCS REMINDS TOBACCO PRODUCERS OF MARKETING CARD VIOLATIONS - The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service recently reminded Appomattox County tobacco program participants of penalties for improper use of their tobacco marketing cards. The cards are issued for each farm with a marketing quota and are to be used by producers to market those kinds of tobacco that are subject to marketing quotas.

Using the card to market tobacco produced on any other farm and allowing the card to be use by another person to identify tobacco produced on another farm, constitutes false identification of tobacco and will result in a reduction in producer allotments and quotas, the assessment of severe monetary marketing quota penalties and other possible civil and criminal liabilities.

When a producer shares in tobacco that is produced on several different farms, but markets the tobacco on marketing cards without regard to the farm of production he/she violates the tobacco program. By using more care in keeping the production from each farm separate during the curing and storing processes, producers can avoid this and many other false identification cases.

Other typical misuses of marketing cards occur when producers with excess tobacco poundage available on their cards allow producers on another farm, or a warehouse operator, to market tobacco on those cards. Some producers who own a farm with a tobacco marketing quota and also rent a farm having a marketing quota, may market the tobacco from both farms on the rented farm's marketing card. Consequently, all undermarketings or unsold tobacco quota, are reflected on the marketing card issued for the operator's own farm when undermarketings may have occurred on both farms.

The tobacco program will be monitored closely to detect these and other possible violations involving illegal use of tobacco marketing cards.

BLOCK PLANS EARLY ANNOUNCEMENT OF 1985 FEED GRAIN PROGRAM - Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block said recently he will announce details of the 1985 feed grain program soon after the September crop production estimates are released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

This will be the earliest in the history of farm programs that farmers learn the details of a USDA acreage reduction program. This early announcement will give farmers the additional time they need to make intelligent decisions in marketing their 1984 crop and planning production for 1985.

The program details will be made public as soon as USDA officials analyze the September 12 crop production estimates.

TC PEGGY LEE 2001, the reserve junior champion, was awarded the reserve grand champion heifer banner by judge Ken Hart, Hastings, Nebraska, in the 185-head Angus show at the 1984 Missouri State Fair, Sedalia. This heifer is owned by Stermer and Uden Franklin, Nebraska; Northcote Farm, Forest, Virginia; and Kyanite Farms, Madisonville, Virginia. [Photo by American Angus Association]

Canning contest a success for homemakers, 4-Hers

The fourth annual Homemaker and 4-H Canning Contest featured beautiful home canned goods on Tuesday, Aug. 4, at Appomattox County High School Cafeteria.

This contest was sponsored by the Appomattox County Extension Homemakers and the Extension Office. Participants were homemakers and 4-H'ers from Appomattox County.

Prizes were provided by the Ball Corporation Consumer Products Division.

Winners and their area of participation are as follows:

4-H Canning: Class 1--Jams and Jellies - 1st Place--Jennifer Coleman, 2nd Place--Jennifer Alvis; Class 2--Pickles - 1st Place--Mary Helen McLaughlin, 2nd Place--Jennifer Alvis; Class 3--Vegetables - 1st Place--Ginny Sweet, 2nd Place--Cheryl Jennings; Class 4--Fruits - 1st Place--Jennifer Alvis.

Homemakers Canning: Class 1--Jams and Jellies - 1st Place--Geraldine Marshall, 2nd Place--Beulah Booth; Class 2--Pickles - 1st Place--Margaret Lee, 2nd Place--Grace Miner; Class 3--Vegetables - 1st Place--Margaret Lee, 2nd Place--Robert Miner; Class 4--Fruits - 1st Place--Margaret. Lee, 2nd Place--Geraldine Marshall.

Prizes for the contest were certificates for a set of canning jars and food preservation books on canning and freezing.

Make plans now to enter the 1984 Five County Fair Canning Contest. This will be held Sept. 10 - 15, 1984. If you have questions about how to prepare your foods for the contest or how to enter them you may call the Appomattox County Extension Office (352-8244). Canning exhibits will be taken to the Fair on Monday, September 10, from the Appomattox County Extension Office. They must be at our office no later than 10 a.m. If a person should have a large number of canned goods to enter, please pick up Fair entry tickets ahead of time and prepare these.

A special word of appreciation goes to the following homemakers who gave leadership for this activity: Mrs. Grace Miner, County President; Mrs. Beulah Booth, County Secretary; Mrs. Betty Brochard; and Mrs. Betty Maxwell. We appreciate their support and cooperation in making this a successful project.

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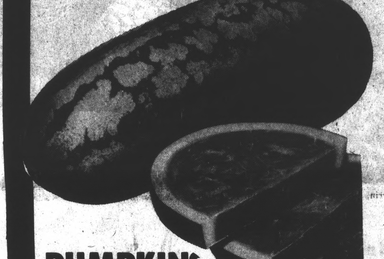

CONTEST RULES

From now through Sept. 21, any unusually large potato, tomato, pumpkin, watermelon or cantaloupe may be entered in the Great Appomattox County Gardening Tournament.

To enter, have your produce weighed at a local market with certified produce scales, and have your grocer give you a note certifying the weight of the fruit or vegetable. Only produce grown in Appomattox County is eligible for the tournament.

Have a picture made of yourself and the entry, or come by the Times-Virginian office and we'll make a picture for you.

The contest will close Friday, Sept. 21. Winners in the five categories will be announced in the Sept. 26 issue of the paper.

Winners in each of the five categories will receive a $25. prize.

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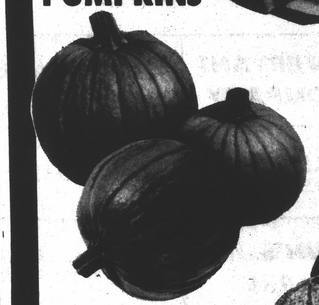

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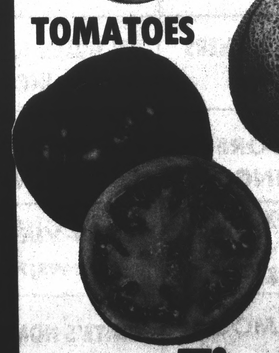

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The South 40

Dickenson stresses production and profit

By JAMES A. SMITH
Extension Agent

At the recent Animal Industry Day the keynote speaker was H. H. Dickenson, who discussed Optimizing Production to Maximize Profits. I want to use excerpts from his presentation for your consideration.

"Consider these facts. When the Pilgrims came to America there were an estimated one million Indians living and occupying the same land we live on today. They were the New World's original farmers producing corn, squash, peas and hunting for meat. But those one million Indians spent their entire time in obtaining food. This meant that the entire population of the U. S. used all its time in the pursuit of food. Today there are just a few more American farmers, about four million. But these four million farmers produce enough food to feed themselves and 220 million other Americans with enough left over to feed one-half the rest of the world. In the past 30 years alone, technological advances have tremendously accelerated these capabilities. Thirty years ago one U. S. farmer fed 18 people. Today he produces enough to feed 70 Americans with a big surplus left over for the world trade.

"The U.S. is the world's greatest example of this direct relationship between ag productivity and affluence. Three percent of our people grow the food. Only 16 percent of an average American's disposable income is spent on food.

"American affluence is a direct result of the farmer and stockman's productivity. Since 1950, output per man hour on the farm has increased three and one-half times compared to only a one and one-half increase in industry. There were nearly three times as many farmers in 1950 as there are today. In the animal segment of U.S. agriculture, beef marketed per breeding female has increased by 65 percent. Milk yield per dairy cow has doubled. Eggs laid per hen have increased by 35 percent. Pigs reach market 20 percent younger and 14 percent leaner.

"It's been more output per man hour of labor, more bushels per acre, more pounds of beef per steer, milk per cow, more pork per sow and on and on.

"And now what's the result of this magnificent U. S. agriculture production story?

"The result is that today, in 1984, a goodly portion of U. S. agriculture is on the brink of bankruptcy. In the midst of a very affluent society, the industry that serves us this basis for this affluence is about to go broke.

"How can this be? How can an industry that has expended production with fewer suppliers get itself in this condition?

"The answer is simple yet complex. In essence, the problem is that income derived from our increased production has not kept pace with the cost of producing it.

"The livestock industry is only one example. In 1960, the beef producers share of the beef dollar was 65 percent. By 1983, that share had declined to 57 percent. The total farm to wholesale price spread has increased by only 85 percent since 1960 while the wholesale to retail price spread has zoomed by 221 percent in that same period.

"If prices had kept pace with costs--or if our products were in a parity price today:

Calves would be at $1.13
Hogs would be at 90 cents
Lambs would be at $1.12
Wheat would be at $7.43/bu.

An article in the paper this year told of the bankruptcy case of an Illinois corn farmer. Every year since 1979, this industrious, capable young man had been named the State Champion Corn Producer logging an average of about 300 bushels per acre. In 1984, he had gone broke. His production capability buried him.

"How did this demise come about?

"It started with the consequences of what I'll describe as the "internationalization" of American Agriculture.

"Until after World War II the U.S., for all practical purposes was both isolated and insulated from the world community. Today, there is no question that the entire free world orbits around the U.S. In addition, the developing countries are looking either to the West or to the East for their political futures. But the entire world, both east and west, looks to the U.S. as the epitome of agriculture technology and production.

"In the mid 60's when the world found itself running short of food, a giant export trade came into being for the first time. By 1970, the emphasis in the U.S. agriculture was on more production.

"So what has this internationalization of U.S. agriculture meant for all of us? It means first that we must realize that in the past 20 years, world trade overall had doubled. It means that U.S. Ag exports have tripled. It means than in 1981, two out of every five acres in the U.S. raising farm products were raising products for export. In 1981, total U.S. farm exports amounted to $44 billion, or one third of our total ag output. Over one-half our feed grains and two-thirds of our wheat is exported.

"But since 1980, this continuous export demand has come to a screeching halt. In fact, since mid 1981, there has been a 25 percent reduction in U.S. ag exports. The shock of this reversal was the catalyst of what can be termed a servere farm recession. For the first time we are faced with export competition from nations that just a few years ago were net importers and who are now net exporters due to government susidy programs that encourage uneconomic production. The E.C. government subsidy programs are the best example. In addition the cost of our U.S. government programs has escalated to unheard of heights.

"Management decisions must be altered from traditional practices. We must take the cost-benefit ratio into account. Production must be optimized to match resources if profits are to be realized.

"I think it is best said by a writer whose name I can't even recall. But he said, "The most significant questions to ask yourself every Monday morning are not how can our industry sell more total product or increase prices but how can I lower my costs, how can I control my debt ratio? In short, how can I make my resources so efficient and I so secure that, no matter how bad things get, my business will be a survivor?"

"Producers tend to think in terms of how much and how big. It would appear that each has a goal, the achievement of 'braggin rights' in the community as to having the heaviest calves, most twin lambs, owning the top gainer at the test center, best per-cow milk production and so on. Too few are matching production to resources an this is what's needed if we are to manage our operations profitably.

"You are going to have to do your own homework. You are going to have to make your own cost-benefit analysis. You are going to have to commit yourself to this management scheme even if it means your calves weigh less per head than your neighbor's calves or your calves didn't top the feeder sale. If in the end your profit margin keeps you in business, those traditional 'braggin rights' won't seem so important.

(See next week's South 40 for a continuation of this topic.)

THIRTEEN YOUNG LADIES from Scottsville, Virginia successfully completed the Nursing Preview Course held this summer at Scottsville Community Hospital. The course is offered to rising seniors from area high schools who have an interest in a health career and the course lasts 5 weeks. Pictured are Rhonda Bagley, Kenbridge; Tracy Watson, Farmville; Sallie Wellons, Victoria; Anne Caldwell, Appomattox; Brenda Gray, Dillwyn; Serita Ligon, Farmville; Kelly Wheeler, Farmville; Kathy Hancock, Drakes Branch; June Elliott, Crewe; Margaret Crews, Meherrin; Fontella Robinson, Appomattox; Patricia Allen, Farmville; and Pamela Mercer of Dillwyn.

Arts, crafts to be featured

The 15th Annual Blackstone Arts and Crafts Festival sponsored by the Blackstone Chamber of Commerce will be held on Saturday, Sept. 22 and Sunday, Sept. 23. The show will be open to the public from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday and from noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday.

The show will be located in the National Guard Armory and the Blackstone Memorial Center, adjacent buildings located at South High and Tavern Streets.

More than 100 craftspeople are expected to exhibit, demonstrate and sell unusual and unique items during the two-day festival. Among the items to be found will be reproduction furniture, basketry, silversmithing, doll houses, buttermolds, leather crafts, ceramics, shellcraft, quilts, gourdcrafts, stained glass, and art work in all media.

A special auction will be held Sunday, beginning at 5 p.m. Items for sale will include donations from the Festival's exhibitors and Chamber of Commerce members. The sale will be conducted by Colonel Martha Daniel and Colonel Ralph Walters of Dixie Auctions, and Colonel James A. Hudson.

Admission is free. Refreshments or complete meals will be available at the show site.

Blackstone is located on Route 460 southwest of Richmond and west of Petersburg.

S.P.C.A. seeks $1,000 prize in Gaines contest

Southside S.P.C.A. in Meherrin, Virginia is one of approximately 700 of the nation's animal shelters actively competing for a $1,000 prize for its fund raising efforts, Candy Schmidt, executive director announced. She hopes to enlist the aid of all this area's dog owners to become a winner.

The program is an off-shoot of the previously announced Shelter Cash-In Plan being conducted by the manufacturers of Gaines dog food. Under the plan, shelters can redeem for cash the starred price markers from the cartons or bags of Gaines products. Depending on how many the shelter redeems, a price marker is worth from 5 cents to 15 cents.

With the contest, the value for the price markers doubles --their top value becomes 30 cents. In addition to the cash value of their redemption, the 50 top redeemers will each collect a $1,000 prize.

"This contest", Ms. Schmidt explained,"gives us an unprecedented opportunity to raise the funds we have been seeking for additional cages for our Shelter to care for the many, many homeless animals of Southside Virginia.

The fact that Gaines is awarding 50 prizes means that small shelters as well as big ones have a good chance to win. It also enables dog lovers to help us even if they cannot donate cash. All they have to do is save the starred price markers for us."

Since the contest closes December 31, residents are asked to deliver their starred price markers several days before that date so that Southside S.P.C.A. can count, bundle and mail them to Gaines by the deadline. Residents can call (804) 736-9595 or visit the Southside S.P.C.A. Animal Shelter on Route 360 in Meherrin, Virginia to learn which products qualify for redemption.

Ruritans enjoy picnic

The Oakville Ruritan Club held their summer picnic recently at the Oakville Ruritan building and enjoyed a great meal and fellowship.

The members' wives attended, and also two former members were guests of the club.

Lathan Harvey was in charge of the picnic and provided a great menu.

The next meeting of the club will be Sept. 6.

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